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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of ) Examiner: Baum, Stuart  
Dean et al. ) Group Art Unit: 1638  
Application No.: 09/890,220 ) Response to Paper No.9  
Filed: 12/18/2001 )  
For: METHODS AND MEANS FOR )  
MODIFICATION OF PLANT )  
CHARACTERISTICS USING THE )  
VERNALIZATION GENE VRN2 )

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RESPONSE TO CLAIM OBJECTIONS AND  
TRAVERSAL OF RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

In response to the restriction requirement under 35 U.S.C. §121 and §372 set forth in the Official Action dated March 21, 2003, applicants offer the following comments and response.

Please amend the claims as follows:

B1  
66. An isolated nucleic acid for use as a probe or primer which comprises a sequence that encodes an amino acid sequence that is partly, substantially, or completely conserved between a VRN2 sequence of SEQ ID Nos. 2, 5, or 8, and at least one of the other sequences shown in Figure 8a (SEQ ID Nos. 2, 12, 10, 14, and 16) or 8b (SEQ ID Nos. 17-38), wherein said nucleic acid is 15 to 40 nucleotides in length.

B2  
70. A pair of primers according to claim 69 which is selected from:

VRN2-AP (SEQ ID NO:67) and VRN2-AJ (SEQ ID NO:63);  
VRN2-AO (SEQ ID NO:66) and VRN2-AS (SEQ ID NO:70); and  
VRN2-AI (SEQ ID NO:62) and VRN2-AJ (SEQ ID NO:63).

B3  
73. A method for identifying or cloning a nucleic acid selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID: